THE MENTOR · DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS
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REMBRANDT

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MENTOR GRAVURES

SOBIESKI

DETAIL OF THE ANATOMY LESSON

THE MILL

Portrait of the Artist

In the Collection of Mr. Henry C. Frick, New York City

MENTOR GRAVURES

ELIZABETH BAS

PORTRAIT OF SASKIA HOLDING A FLOWER

COPPENOL

By Himself

THE visitor to the Netherland art galleries should leave his notions of Greek and Italian art with his umbrella, at the entrance. Holland is no place to talk about canons of proportion or types of beauty or ideals of any kind. The Dutch are now, as they have always been, a people confronted by the realities of existence, and see life, literature, and art as facts rather than as fancies. There has never been much romance about them, but, on the contrary, a realization of the existent, a grasp of the truth and vitality of things, a keen penetration into the human problem. There never was any need for far-fetched fancies or ideals. The life about them interested and impressed them, and, from the very beginning, the Dutch painters were painting the portrait of their own land and people. The result was an art that has a distinct quality of its own—just as distinct a quality as the art of Persia or Japan. You would not think of judging Japanese art by that of Italy. Why then think of Dutch art in any other terms than its own?

Rembrandt and Raphael

To carry out the thought in illustration, it may be said that Rembrandt, the great Dutchman, was the very opposite of Raphael, the great Italian. He painted no allegories on Vatican walls, was not led away by

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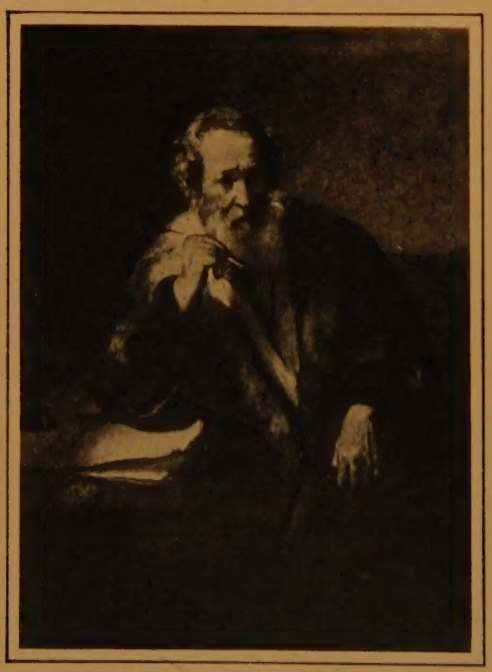
Renaissance revivals of Greek form, dreamed no dreams of uniting pagan types with Christian ideals. Even technically he was widely different from Raphael. He painted the easel picture in oils, had no love whatever for Italian line and composition, did all his drawing and modeling by catches of shadow, and produced his most startling effects by the dramatic use of light and color. In all this Rembrandt was merely reflecting his time and his people in his own ingenious way. He was emphatically true to the Dutch point of view, and today his art is full of truth, force, vitality, character. In fact, that word "character" is the keynote to all his work. It furthermore explains that æsthetic paradox, sometimes applied to Rembrandt, "the beauty of the ugly." For many of his people are ugly, if we regard them for the straightness of their foreheads and noses, the oval of their chins, or the proportions of their figures; but they are beautiful in their simplicity of presence, their unconscious sincerity, their profound truth of character.

PORTRAIT OF A MAN
Altman Collection of Metropolitan Museum, New York



THE ARCHITECT
In the Gallery at Cassel, Germany

Rembrandt as a Leader

No country in Europe produced a finer quality of art, or a more learned school of craftsmen, than Holland. There was a master genius there as elsewhere, and that genius was Rembrandt. He came when Holland had reached her highest pitch of power—came on the crest of the wave of which he and his fellow painters were the light and color. He has been acclaimed as her great painter and he deserves that title, for of all the Dutch masters he was practically the only one who was universal in his scope. His art alone,

in its appeal, travels beyond the confines of the Netherlands. What he has to say is world-embracing, and finds sympathetic response with all peoples. He is profound in his humanity, in his penetration into life problems, in his sympathy with his fellow man. The poor, mean-looking Amsterdam Jews that he portrayed in so many of his pictures are pathetic in their humility, their suffering, their patience. He was always taking for models the humble, the despised, the lowly. His heart seemed to go out to them.

His Biblical Pictures

And with such types what a new interpretation he gave the Bible! How he realized Bible truth and brought it home to his own people by using the Jew of the quarter and the boor of the polder for models! Look at the "Supper at Emmaus"—look for the intensity of the types rather than for any regularity of form. What pathos in the pale, blue-lipped Christ, with the phosphorescent glimmer of the tomb about the architecture at the back! What amazement in the disciples at the table! What fear in the boy bringing in the dish! This was perhaps the first time in art that the "Supper at Emmaus" was made real and believable. The story was not only realized, but humanized. All of Rembrandt's Biblical pictures were of this nature. Look again at the "Manoah's Prayer," or the "Tobit and the Angel," or the "Sacrifice of Abraham." They are Dutch types again, in Dutch costumes and surroundings. Rembrandt knew very well that the Biblical characters were not Dutch in type, and that the people in the time of Christ did not dress like the boors and burghers of Holland. He purposely painted his own people in their native costumes, that he might the better and the more forcefully bring realization home to them. It was not, is not, affectation. Study the Manoah and his wife, the Abraham, the family of Tobit on the doorstep, and you cannot find in all art people of more unconscious sincerity. Rembrandt believed in them. And that is why you and I believe in them today.

JAN HERMANSZ KRUL
In the Gallery at Cassel, Germany

Rembrandt as a Portrait Painter

Rembrandt painted many Biblical pictures, which are at present widely scattered throughout the European galleries. In all of them he gave a new interpretation, a profound insight, a real meaning, to Scriptural

PORTRAIT OF JAN SIX
In the Six Gallery, Amsterdam

story. In addition he painted many figure compositions of a historical or mythological cast. But his great success, after all said and done, was with the portrait. His technical methods were well suited to the portrait, and he was unsurpassed in giving the truth of presence in his sitter. The quiet dignity of his Dutch burghers, their repose and simplicity, the complete absence of anything like pretense about them, made up Rembrandt's point of view; but to this he added a cunning hand and a technical skill that were wonderful. How superbly with his catches of light and shade he could draw an eye, a forehead, a nose, a chin! How instantly and inevitably he caught the salient feature and turned it by sharp emphasis into positive expression! What significance he could get out of an outstretched hand, a bent back, a bowed head! These were features wherewith he proclaimed the character of his sitter. The "Portrait of an Old Lady," in the National Gallery, London, has the flabby cheek, the trembling lip, the wrinkled brow of the aged; but you can also see that hers has been a life of suffering, and that the eyes have often been blinded with tears. On the contrary, the "Portrait of a Man"—the so-called Sobieski, at Petrograd, has the determination and force of the warrior. It has grip and firmness and courage about it. These are not only in the features, but Rembrandt has even put them in the brush work—the manner of handling. Again, by way of contrast, the heads in the "Lesson in Anatomy" are put in calmly, serenely, inevitably just right. What intelligence, seriousness, and living presence they have! They are what might be called speaking likenesses, in the sense that all they lack of life is speech. And what can one say that will adequately describe the loveliness of mood, the eternal womanly, in the "Portrait of Saskia," at Cassel! It is a wonder as a piece of color, but

WOMAN WITH PINK
In the Gallery at Cassel, Germany

still more wonderful as a characterization of the painter's wife. Once more, for a further contrast, look at the "Portrait of Coppenol." He is supposed to be a writing master because he is sharpening a quill pen, but whatever his profession or pursuit, have you any difficulty in seeing here a dull-witted person of very limited intelligence? The very fatness of the forehead, so remarkable in its realistic rendering, the narrow eyes, with their vacant stare, the pumpkin cheeks and head, the soft, lazy hands, seem to point to some clerk or pedagogue, who had not enough brains to know that he wanted more.

Rembrandt was easily one of the great group of portrait painters with Titian, Velasquez, and Holbein. And by this I mean no faint praise. It seems to be thought in some quarters that portraiture is somehow an inferior branch of painting. It is said to require no invention or imagination. But nothing could be more mistaken than such an idea. When we speak of Rembrandt, Titian, Velasquez, and Holbein we are speaking of the world's great masters, and perhaps their most satisfactory masterpieces are their portraits. A painter who can adequately portray his fellow man, as Rembrandt did, has practically said the last word in art. That Rembrandt had this gift and accomplishment is evidenced by the high esteem in which his work is held by painters even to this day.

His Technical Method

There was no trick about Rembrandt's painting. He was no slave to a peculiar color, canvas or brush. He painted at times with a palette knife: at other times with his thumb. He kneaded the surface, ploughed

THE NIGHT WATCH* In the Ryks Museum, Amsterdam

*A fine gravure reproduction of this painting appears in The Mentor, Number 17, "Dutch Masterpieces."

SYNDICS OF THE CLOTH HALL* In the Ryks Museum, Amsterdam

through it when it was wet, did almost anything to get effects by catches of light and shade whereby he drew and modeled. But none of these small peculiarities explains his technical success. His methods were sound enough, and for the most part were known before his day; but he applied them better and increased their carrying power. He has been called the master of light and shade, and so, indeed, he was within a limited range. It was the same light and shade known to Leonardo, Giorgione, and Carravagio, and probably Rembrandt got it from pictures of the Neapolitan School, though he never was in Italy. But Rembrandt improved upon the Italian method of using shadow. He made it transparent, enveloping, mysterious. And its antithesis, light, he made penetrating and dramatic by putting it in sharp contrast. Out of the two he got wonderful effects. In doing the portrait head, for instance, he threw his highest light on the collar, the nose, the chin, the forehead. This high light ran off quickly into half-light and then into shadow, so that by the time the ear or side of the neck was reached, dark, even black, notes were used. The decrease was rapid; in fact often violent, but this only served to focus the attention more keenly upon the dominant features of the face. The result was what has been called "forced," but it was very effective. It was the same effect that one sees today at the opera, when the chief actor is in the spot-light and the rest of the stage is in gloom.

The Night Watch

But this violent focusing of light had its limitations even in Rembrandt's hands. The "Night Watch" exemplifies them. This was to be a portrait group of the sixteen members of the Frans Banning Cock

*A fine gravure reproduction of this painting appears in The Mentor, Number 8, "Pictures We Love to Live With."

Shooting Company. The members wanted their portraits painted in a group, after the manner of the time, and Rembrandt conceived the idea of painting the portraits and making a stirring picture of the company coming out of its quarters, at one and the same time. It was an ambitious scheme, and not wholly successful, because here came in the limitations of his method. He painted sixteen portraits with his spot-light illumination, each one being completed under its own light. The picture lacked that one light which should have bound together the whole company. As a result there were sixteen separate portraits on the one canvas, held together in measure by shadow, color and atmosphere, but spotty in the lighting. The French writers of the eighteenth century could not understand the lighting, and were led to think the picture represented a night scene. They called it the "Ronde de Nuit," and, later, Sir Joshua Reynolds translated this into "Night Watch." But nothing is more certain than that Rembrandt intended it for a day scene in full sunlight. It was simply his arbitrary way of handling light that made a night effect out of daylight.

That is about the only criticism that can be lodged against the "Night Watch." Light and color have both been sacrificed to shadow; but when that is conceded the picture still remains a marvel of color, shadow, and atmosphere, and a wonder of life and action. The movement—the bustle of it—is superb. The Captain and his Lieutenant in the foreground are in full light, but back of them and around them, emerging out of the gloom, are nebulous heads, flashing casques, plumes, halberds, guns, drums,

THE ANATOMY LESSON In the Hague Museum

dogs, street urchins—all the belongings of a militia company on parade. They are not only wonderful in their action, but in their mystery of appearance, coming out of shadow depths into light. Of course, the picture was not entirely satisfactory to the sixteen. They had bargained for their portraits, and little knew then how cheaply they were purchasing immortality. Those in the background complained that they were not sufficiently spot-lighted, not treated with sufficient importance; in fact, subordinated to those in the front row. But the picture, as a picture, is certainly successful, is a great favorite with all art-lovers, and in the Ryks Museum in Amsterdam, where it now hangs, it is considered one of the world's great masterpieces. Truer lighting—that is truer to the facts of general illumination—is seen in the earlier "Lesson in Anatomy" and the later "Syndics of the Cloth Hall," but neither picture has the fascination nor the imagination of the "Night Watch."

THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM
In the Old Pinacothek, Munich

Rembrandt's Styles

Rembrandt's work is usually divided into three different periods. At first his method of handling was calm, measured, even at times smooth. His light and color were gray, as also his backgrounds. This period has been called his "gray period." The "Lesson in Anatomy," the "Sacrifice of Abraham," the "Coppenol," the "Elizabeth Bas," the "Old Lady" of the National Gallery, London, all illustrate this early manner. It was gradually encroached upon and finally superseded by a fuller, freer handling of the brush, with much warmer color and light, tending toward reddish gold. This has been called his "golden period," and marks the midday of his career. The beautiful "Saskia," at Cassel, and the so-called "Sobieski," at Petrograd, illustrate the beginning of this period—the changing from gray to warmer notes of red, yellow, and gold. The "Woman with the Pink," at Cassel, the "Manoah's Prayer,"

THE ANGEL LEAVING TOBIT
In the Gallery of the Louvre, Paris

at Dresden, the "Night Watch," were done further along in this middle period. It was the time when Rembrandt was in his full strength, saw comprehensively, handled a full palette of color, and was almost infallibly accurate with his hand. In his third and last period Rembrandt's work became rather hot and foxy in color, dark in illumination, kneaded and thumbed in the surface, and sometimes uncertain in drawing. He was expanding into a larger view and vision up to the last—seeing objects in their broader relations and proportions rather than in their surfaces. Toward the close he often slurred the surfaces, neglected textual qualities, and threw his whole force into the rendering of mass in relation to light, air, and color. The pictures of this period are hard for the beginner in art to understand, because he is misled by the roughness of the surfaces, the messy state of the pigments, the apparent fumbling, kneading, rubbing out and amending, of the brush work. But, as we have said, Rembrandt was purposely slurring surface truths for the greater truths of bulk, weight, and general relationship. The best example of this late work among our illustrations is the "Syndics of the Cloth Hall," in the Ryks Museum, Amsterdam. In it Rembrandt went back to his early method of lighting, but continued with his late manner of handling and coloring. It is superbly broad in vision, absolute in its truth to life, and convincing in its incident. The cloth merchants are seated about a table, perhaps figuring up their year's balance, when someone opens the door to enter

BLESSING OF JACOB
In the Gallery at Cassel, Germany

and they all look up to see the incomer. Nothing could be simpler, more direct, or truer. Rembrandt never painted anything better. For here he completely fulfilled expectations. Many of his later canvases he could not complete. The "Blessing of Jacob," at Cassel, for instance, he probably gave up in despair, or was working upon at the time of his death. He had reached a pitch in his career when he saw and strove for things that his hand or brush could not realize or pin down to canvas. That is the great stone wall that even genius encounters and cannot surmount.

The Master's Life

The story of Rembrandt's career is recited elsewhere in this number of The Mentor, but it may be said here that it was not different from that of many other painters. He came up to Amsterdam from the outlying country, and achieved celebrity at an early age. Praise and pay and pupils poured in upon him. He married the beautiful Saskia and was happy. But as he expanded in vision and methods he went beyond the understanding and the appreciation of his public. His pupils, such as Bol and Flinck, who had a more commonplace point of view, and a smoother, prettier style of painting, outdid him in public favor. The public began to desert him, the fair Saskia died, the great master fell upon evil days, and finally passed out in penury and want—evidently neglected and possibly forgotten by the age and people he had done so much to glorify. The record of his death in the Burial Book of the Wester Kirk, Amsterdam, is pathetic in its meagerness. "Tuesday, 8th Oct., 1669. Rembrandt van Rijn, painter on the Roozegraft, opposite the Doolhof. Leaves two children." It almost looks as though he were identified only by the squalid quarters in which he died. And this was Rembrandt, the greatest master north of the Alps, and a genius of almost Shakespearian quality!

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY
In the National Gallery, London

Many Pictures Attributed to Him

It seems that not only was Rembrandt and his art misunderstood in his own time, but that he is still misunderstood at the present time. This is in measure due to many pictures which are mistakenly attributed to him. One need not be an expert to find it strange that of twenty pupils of Rembrandt, who painted more or less in his style, there remain hardly twenty pictures apiece, and of some

of them not even one. What paralyzed their hands or destroyed their works? What became of their pictures? You begin to get a glimmer of light when you understand that to Rembrandt there are assigned a thousand or fifteen hundred examples; that these are painted in fifteen or twenty different styles, though all superficially resembling Rembrandt's style. Almost everything that is Rembrandtesque, or even casually resembles Rembrandt, has been signed up and sold as his since the master came back to popular favor. The name is one that now brings thousands of dollars in the auction room, and what wonder that it is often misused!

SASKIA VAN ULENBURG *
In the Gallery at Cassel, Germany

These Rembrandtesque pictures were done by other hands than his, are pupils' works, or school work or copies, or, in a few cases, forgeries. Rembrandt's work has never been critically studied as that of Leonardo or Giorgione (jore-joe'-nee). Strange, again, is it not, that Leonardo and Giorgione in the final analysis should have less than a dozen pictures apiece left to them, while Rembrandt should still be given his thousand? Northern art has not had a critical searchlight turned upon it, as had Italian art thirty years ago. When it does, the present catalogue of Rembrandts will crumble. In the meantime, the art student would better accept Rembrandt only in his best authenticated works, such, for instance, as are reproduced in this number of The Mentor. Half of the so-called Rembrandts in the European galleries are now to be taken with a grain of salt. They may be, and often are, exceedingly good pictures, but they are not by Rembrandt.

*A fine gravure reproduction of this painting appears in The Mentor, Number 28.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

GREAT MASTERS OF DUTCH AND FLEMISH PAINTING — *Bode*
London, 1909.

OLD MASTERS OF BELGIUM AND HOLLAND — *Fromentin*
Boston, 1882.

THE DUTCH SCHOOL OF PAINTING
London, 1885 — *Havard*

REMBRANDT — *Michel*
New York, 1894

REMBRANDT — *Verhaeren*
(Les Grands Artistes), Paris.

REMBRANDT — *Vosmoer*
Paris, 1877.

REMBRANDT — *Valentiner*
(Klassiker die Kunst), Stuttgart.

REMBRANDT, A STUDY OF HIS LIFE AND WORK — *Brown*
New York, 1907.

*** Information concerning the above books and articles may be had on application to the Editor of The Mentor.

THE OPEN LETTER

"Why are pictures repeated," asks one of our readers. We rarely repeat a picture, but we *do* print more than one picture of the same subject—and for a most excellent reason: The Mentor is not through with a subject in one number. That would be a poor and meager educational service. The plan of The Mentor Association is to present subjects to its members in various ways, so that they may consider these subjects from different points of view. This is done so as to give the reader a broad, comprehensive grasp of things. Let me illustrate. The Taj Mahal is one of the most beautiful buildings in existence. When, therefore, we published The Mentor on "Beautiful Buildings of the World," we printed, of course, a picture of the Taj Mahal. When we came to the subject of India in Mr. Elmendorf's series of travel numbers, we could not overlook the exquisite Taj Mahal—which is one of the sights of India. We shall later on have a number of The Mentor on Oriental Architecture. The Taj Mahal being one of the finest examples of oriental architecture, cannot of course be ignored in that number simply because we printed two pictures of the building in former Mentors. In each case the reader is asked to consider the Taj Mahal from a different point of view. And, moreover, we do not repeat the same picture. We print three different views of the Taj Mahal.

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Another instance. We printed in The Mentor devoted to "Masters of the Violin" a very fine portrait of the Spanish violinist, Sarasate. This picture not only happens to be a most interesting portrait of the great violinist, but it has a special art value in having come from the brush of Whistler. Next year we shall devote a number of The Mentor to the work of James MacNeil Whistler. When we do so it will be impossible for us to ignore this wonderful portrait of Sarasate, for it is a distinguished example of Whistler's art. The present number is another case in point. We have considered Rembrandt's art several times in The Mentor. He occupied a prominent place, as you know, in the number devoted to "Dutch Masterpieces." He also appears in the number on "The Wife in Art." And now we devote a number exclusively to him.

The basic idea of The Mentor is a broad one. We do not consider that a subject, once treated, must be boxed up and shelved. Oh, no! While we make our excursions into the different fields of knowledge, we shall often turn our faces back to some great subject of interest that we have already observed and consider it anew from a different point of view.

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When you write to The Mentor always sign your name and address. The old time-worn signatures of "Reader" or "Friend" make it hard for us to give Mentor service. The following came into the office a few days ago:

"Have greatly enjoyed your Mentor this last year. One suggestion I would make, though, is relative to the Madonna Ansidei. That famous painting was purchased by Morgan a number of years ago. In 1910 it was in the National Gallery, as a loan, and at present is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, one of its greatest treasures. Ought our public to be informed by The Mentor that it is in London?"

A READER.

Where our reader got the notion that the Ansidei Madonna is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York, I am at a loss to understand. If that famous work had ever been brought to America, surely the whole world would have known of it. Works of art of such importance are not moved about without the public being advised of it. The Ansidei Madonna is in the National Museum, London, and the circumstances of its being placed there are exactly as stated in The Mentor. It was purchased for the National Museum from the Duke of Marlborough's collection for about $350,000. The Raphael Madonna, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, that our reader refers to, is known as the "Madonna of St. Anthony of Padua." I hope that this will catch the eye of our friendly reader, and especially I hope that he will not continue to entertain the thought, or impart it to others, that The Mentor is giving the public incorrect information concerning the Ansidei Madonna.

W. D. Moffat

EDITOR

THE HERMITAGE, PETROGRAD

SOBIESKI—PORTRAIT BY REMBRANDT

ONE

SOMETIMES it is difficult to learn the truth about a great man. This is particularly so in the case of one who lived three centuries ago; for in those days people were not as careful to keep records as they are today. For years the great painter Rembrandt was regarded as having been ignorant, boorish, and avaricious. Fables making him out to be such a character sprang up without any foundation. It is only within the last fifty years that we have come to know the true Rembrandt, and to realize that he had profound sympathy, a powerful imagination, and originality of mind, and that he was a poet as well as a painter, an idealist and also a realist. He has justly been called "the Shakespeare of Holland."

Rembrandt Harmens van Rijn—for that is his full name—was born at Leyden, a town near Amsterdam, in Holland, on July 15, 1605. Leyden is famous in history as the birthplace of many great artists and other men of renown. Rembrandt's home overlooked the river Rhine. He was the son of a well-to-do miller, and his parents were ambitious that Rembrandt enter the law, for his older brothers had been sent into trade.

At that time Holland was entering upon her great career of national enterprise. Science and literature flourished, poetry and the stage were cultivated by her people, and art was made welcome in every town, large and small. So Rembrandt, after he had been sent to the high school at Leyden, decided to become a painter. For already within him he felt the first urgings of genius.

Accordingly, when Rembrandt was only twelve or thirteen years old, his father allowed him to become a pupil of Jacob van Swanenburch, a painter of no great ability, who, however, enjoyed some reputation because he had studied in Italy. Three years later the boy was placed under Pieter Lastman, of Amsterdam, who was a much better artist and teacher. Authorities differ as to how long Rembrandt remained with Lastman. One says that he was his pupil until he was nineteen years old; another believes that he studied with him for only six months. At any rate, sometime after 1623 Rembrandt returned to the home of his parents at Leyden.

During these first years of his artistic life, Rembrandt worked hard. He painted pictures of almost everyone he saw—beggars, cripples, and in short every picturesque face and form of which he could get hold. Life, character, and special lighting effects were his principal concern. Frequently he used his mother for a model, and from these portraits we can trace his strong resemblance to her. The young artist also liked to paint his father and sisters; and by the number of portraits he painted of himself, we can see that from the very beginning he worked hard to master every form of expression, learning to draw the human face as it appeared not only to the casual observer, but also to one who read the character within. It is said that during his lifetime Rembrandt painted nearly sixty portraits of himself.

Time went by, and the young artist of Leyden was attracting the attention of art lovers in the great metropolis of Amsterdam. Some of them urged him to move there; and feeling that he was now strong enough to stand alone, Rembrandt rented a large house in Amsterdam and removed there in 1631. He divided the upper part of his house into small studios, and there he worked and taught. His pupils were many and from wealthy families. From this teaching Rembrandt derived a large income.

Fortune smiled upon him. At one bound he leaped into the position of the leading portrait painter of Amsterdam. Numerous commissions for portraits flowed in upon him, and during the first few years of his residence there he painted at least forty. When he was only twenty-six years old, in 1632, he painted the "Anatomy Lesson," a picture that made an enormous sensation, and holds its place today as one of Rembrandt's masterpieces.

The year 1634 was one of the happiest in Rembrandt's life. He was then at the beginning of a successful artistic career, and it was at that time that he married Saskia van Ulenburg, a beautiful Frisian maiden. Saskia brought him love and wealth. Eight years of prosperity and sunshine followed their union.

Rembrandt and his wife were a joyous pair. They had four children, a boy and two girls who died in infancy—and a son, Titus, who grew to man's estate.

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ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MENTOR, VOL. 4, No. 20, SERIAL No. 120
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ETAIL OF
HE ANATOMY LESSON.
Y REMBRANDT
THE HAGUE MUSEUM

THE year 1640 marks the beginning of what may be termed the second period of Rembrandt's life and work. It was during these years that success and happiness were his. From then until 1654 Rembrandt worked in what has been called his "second manner." His art grew in power, and the coldness of his "first manner" had disappeared. He had passed through a period of exaggerated expression and had come to a truer, calmer form of painting. It is interesting to compare his own portrait painted in 1640 with the earlier portraits of himself. This painting portrays a man strong and robust, with powerful head, determined chin, and keen, penetrating eyes. This was the Rembrandt of that period, the man confidently independent and careless as to his popularity as an artist.

Rembrandt had now many pupils. He had bought a house in Amsterdam, and had placed in it a great collection of paintings and engravings. At that time the artist was living a life of simple domesticity, happy with his wife and children. His friends were many, and his interests were large.

Rembrandt's mother died in 1640, and two years later the great sorrow of his life came upon him. His wife Saskia died. This changed everything for him. The events of his latter days are clouded in obscurity.

The terms of Saskia's will are interesting, in that they may throw some light upon a later action of the artist's, which will be related further on. She left her money to their son Titus, with Rembrandt as sole trustee, and with full use of the money until he should marry again or until the marriage of Titus.

It was in 1642 also that Rembrandt painted his most famous picture—the "Night Watch." This is one of the landmarks of Rembrandt's career. However, it is not a night watch at all, but a call to arms by day, and more properly should be named the "Day Watch."

The artist's life was changed after the death of his wife. No longer does he appear to have been the buoyant, carefree painter and art lover. There is a pathetic sadness in many of his works done at this time. This is well illustrated in his pictures of the Holy Family, a subject which was a favorite with him during this period of his life.

One reason for Rembrandt's unhappiness was his waning popularity. The "Night Watch," which was painted to order as a collection of portraits in one composition, did not prove satisfactory to his customers. Some of them complained of being put in the background and obscured. Naturally, the artist could not give places of prominence to every person in the picture. Not understanding this, however, these people took offence at his disposition of the characters, and transferred their patronage elsewhere.

It was at this time that Rembrandt did a great deal of landscape painting, and genius that he was, he made a success of it. It is to this period that the famous painting, "The Mill," is ascribed.

But though he was still the great artist, a cloud of adversity was slowly coming over Rembrandt's life. Evil days were at hand.

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DURING the last part of the seventeenth century money was scarce in Holland. Long continued wars and civil troubles had worn out the country. Financial depression overwhelmed Amsterdam; and in addition to this the taste in art changed, and Rembrandt and his pictures were neglected.

Most of Rembrandt's money was tied up in his house and in his large collection of valuable pictures; and when his paintings ceased to be in demand, he was forced to borrow money. Very little is known of the artist's life at this time. He was living with his servant, Hendrickje Stoffels, and in 1654 a child was born to them. To her Rembrandt gave the name of Cornelia, after his much loved mother. It has been asserted that he married Hendrickje, but it is probable that he did not, for in such a case the money left by Saskia would have gone at once to her son Titus, according to the will.

In 1656 Rembrandt's financial affairs went crashing down to ruin. By a process of law his house and land were transferred to Titus. But as his son was still a minor, Rembrandt was allowed to remain in charge of Saskia's estate. And then ruin stared him in the face. In July, 1656, Rembrandt was declared bankrupt, and an inventory of his property was ordered. Two years later the larger part of his collection of etchings and drawings was sold. The sum realized was only a small fraction of their value.

Rembrandt, driven from his house, stripped of everything he possessed, without friends or money, took a modest lodging in Amsterdam. The city which once had acclaimed him as its greatest portrait painter now passed him by and left him alone to wait for death.

During all these dark years, however, Rembrandt was painting some of his greatest pictures. Even amid the ruins of his affairs he could go calmly on working; and for this he deserves the highest respect. Among the works of this time are the portrait of Jan Six, the "Adoration of the Magi," and "John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness." At the same time he continued to paint his own portrait; but in these pictures of the artist in his old age we see a man broken by misfortune.

Titus, Rembrandt's only son, had married. He died in 1668, leaving one child. A year later, on October 8, 1669, Rembrandt himself passed away. In the "Livre Mortuaire" of the Wester Kerk in Amsterdam appears the following simple entry, relating to his death: "Tuesday, 8th Oct., 1669, Rembrandt van Rijn, Painter on the Rovzegraft, opposite the Doolhof. Leaves two children."

Rembrandt outlived his popularity, although he was the greatest genius of his time and country, and in fact one of the great geniuses of all time and all countries. He was left to die alone and neglected by his fellow-countrymen, who had they foreseen the fame that the future held in store for him, might have sought his humble lodging to honor him on bended knee.

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I THE RVKS MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

ELIZABETH BAS—PORTRAIT BY REMBRANDT

FOUR

ONE day Rembrandt was employed in painting the portraits of a very rich family in Amsterdam. This was to be a group picture, and as usual with him, Rembrandt was working hard to make it a success. While he was painting, someone opened the door of the room in which he was and brought in the dead body of a monkey.

The appearance of this funny little creature appealed to the artist at once. He wanted to make a picture of it right away. But the only thing on which he could make the drawing was the canvas on which he was painting the portraits of the rich family. So Rembrandt, without hesitation, painted the monkey in among their portraits. They were very angry, of course, but in those days Rembrandt was at the height of his career and he did not have to concern himself about how his customers felt.

This little incident, whether it is strictly true or not, illustrates one side of Rembrandt's character. When he was most successful he was carefree and independent. It may have been this independence that brought him to his ruin—although in all probability it was the indifference of his fellow citizens to his work.

The age in which Rembrandt lived cared little for personalities. There were no newspapers to record his doings, and no one of his contemporaries cared enough about it to write down much about his life and work. For these reasons, the world has never known much about Rembrandt, the man. We know that he was light-hearted, headstrong and extravagant. We know that he was neglected and died poor and feeble. But we know little more than this, although of late more reliable information concerning the life of this great painter has been found.

A man's faults are usually remembered when his virtues are forgotten. For years it pleased biographers to represent Rembrandt as a ne'er-do-well artist, who could not take advantage of his opportunities. We know now, however, that his faults were very human ones, and that his merits greatly overbalanced them.

As a boy the artist was not an industrious scholar. He looked upon reading and writing as rather troublesome and hardly worth the labor involved in learning them. Later he worked hard at his chosen career, and the great number of pictures that he painted is sufficient evidence that he was by no means lazy.

Probably Rembrandt's greatest fault was his extravagance. Many a man can endure adversity with courage; success is sometimes more difficult to bear. Hard luck often brings out the best in a man; success may destroy it. Rembrandt was no exception. He spent his money freely, and like the grasshopper of the fable, sang happily through the summer, with no thought of the cold to come.

He liked to attend sales of works of art, and he gladly paid huge sums for any pictures that caught his fancy. It is said that the dealers came very soon to know his rash and reckless methods and would push the prices far up, confident that Rembrandt would meet them. At the same time, the artist liked to buy expensive jewels for his wife. He loved Saskia devotedly, and he wanted her to have everything of the finest. This manner of open-handed living naturally played havoc with his finances.

When Saskia died Rembrandt was heartbroken. His customers fell off and many troubles overwhelmed him. His friends helped him as much as possible, but money ran through his hands like water through a sieve, and he could not seem to control his expenditures. Then later the death of his faithful Hendrickje was the last blow to his happiness. For a few years Rembrandt lingered, and then he too passed into the great silence.

It is true that many of Rembrandt's troubles were self-inflicted; but he suffered enough to pay for his faults. At any rate it is better to remember him as a great genius and a man worthy of respect and honor.

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I THE DRESDEN GALLERY SASKIA HOLDING A FLOWER—PORTRAIT BY REMBRANDT

REMBRANDT'S life was one of curious contrasts. During his early manhood he was Amsterdam's leading portrait painter. These were years of happiness and carefree enjoyment of all the good things of life. But almost as suddenly as the painter stepped into the sunshine of success, he fell back into the shadows of adversity. One of the principal causes of his happiness was his wife, Saskia. Just as her entrance into his life coincided with the period of his greatest prosperity, so her death marked the beginning of his darker years. It would seem almost as though Saskia were his guardian angel, and that with her departure Rembrandt's star began to descend.

Saskia van Ulenburg was the ninth child of a wealthy patrician family of Friesland. She was born at Leeuwarden in 1612. Saskia became an orphan at an early age, and then she made her home with one or the other of her married sisters in turn, and finally with a cousin, who lived in Amsterdam. It was at the house of this cousin that Rembrandt met her. Charmed by her youthful grace, he obtained permission to paint several portraits of her.

Saskia at this time was a slender girl, rather small of stature. Her features were very regular, and her eyes were of a beautiful brown shade, matching her soft reddish brown hair. Her brilliant complexion was the envy of her less favored companions.

The young painter soon showed that he took a special interest in Saskia. He bestowed great care on her portraits, and was in her company as much as possible. He himself was young, attractive, and good looking; and we may be sure that Saskia's family did not frown upon his suit. They probably realized that Rembrandt would make an excellent husband for their ward.

Rembrandt's father had died some time before this, and his mother gladly gave her consent to the marriage. Saskia and Rembrandt were made man and wife on June 22, 1634.

Their life together was very happy. Rembrandt's tastes were domestic, and he was never more pleased than when planning his wife's happiness. He centered his whole thought and energy upon her. Saskia, simple and loving, was governed in all things by his wishes; she was entirely devoted to him.

Rembrandt liked to use Saskia as his model. Some of the better known pictures for which she posed are her own portrait in the Cassel Gallery, the "Jewish Bride," painted in 1634, which is now in the Hermitage in Petrograd, "Sophonisba Receiving the Cup of Poison from Massinissa," in the Prado at Madrid, which is also dated 1634, and the famous painting of Saskia and himself, now in the Dresden Gallery and done about 1635, which represents Rembrandt in military costume, seated at a table, with a long glass of sparkling wine in his hand and Saskia perched on his knee.

At this period in his life everything seemed to smile on Rembrandt. He was extravagant and did not know the meaning of the word "save." Saskia's health had not as yet given cause for anxiety. But sad days were to come. Three children were lost in rapid succession. In 1641 the only child of theirs who survived was born. He was named Titus, after Saskia's sister Titia. But the young wife did not live long after her son was born. Her health broke down, and an etching made by Rembrandt about 1640 shows her with sharpened features, feverish eyes, and an expression of pensive melancholy. The happy days were over. Their brief union, begun in joy, was soon to end in tears. As if in prophecy, Rembrandt's anxieties were deepened by another sorrow—the death of his mother in 1640.

Saskia's illness made rapid progress. Day after day she faded, and no longer did the artist have any delusions as to her recovery. Saskia made her will on June 5, 1642. She herself, however, had not lost all hope, for in this will she spoke of the children she might eventually have. She made Rembrandt trustee of her property for their son Titus, showing her perfect trust in her husband. At the end of the document she signed her name for the last time in tremulous, almost illegible characters, as if exhausted by the effort.

It was only a few days later that Saskia passed away, on June 19, 1642. Rembrandt followed her coffin to the Oude Kerk and then returned to his lonely house, where everything reminded him of his brief happiness and where he was now alone with a child nine months old. He never seemed to recover from the blow. He went on working, and during the years to come painted some of his greatest pictures; but seemingly he had lost his grip on life, and from that time on it was only a matter of a few years until he was overwhelmed by financial troubles and was driven to a humble lodging and his death.

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N THE CASSEL GALLERY

COPPERNOL—PORTRAIT BY REMBRANDT

MANY people in considering Rembrandt think of him only as a master painter; they overlook the fact that he was also the leading etcher of his time. This monograph will take up briefly this part of the great artist's work.

It is related of Hokusai, the Japanese artist, that he once said that he hoped to live to be very old, and that he might have time to learn to draw in such a way that every stroke of his pencil would be the expression of some living thing. That is exactly what Rembrandt managed to do in almost every one of his etchings. This is particularly true of the wonderful little etching of his mother. One critic says that on looking at this etching he was compelled to close his eyes for a moment, because of the tears that rose unbidden at sight of it. It would be hard to find anything more worthy of praise than this engraving. Every line expresses motherly kindness, sweetness, and thoughtfulness. Nothing could have been omitted; the etching is complete.

So skilful was Rembrandt as an etcher that the nobleness of his ideas and the depth of his nature are apt to be overlooked. His engravings are pervaded by his big, artistic personality and by his own ennobling influence. The artist's soul spoke not only through the choice of subject, but found expression in every single detail. He showed a singular inventive power, originality of conception, and a great depth of understanding.

Among Rembrandt's etchings were many wonderfully life-like portraits, biblical subjects, and landscapes. An interesting thing about all this work is that most of it was done between the years 1639 and 1661. After this Rembrandt seems to have renounced etching entirely. In these twenty years he produced his greatest works, on every one of which appears the impress of the genius of the man.

Rembrandt seems to have had a particular interest in making etchings of beggars. He delighted to draw them. These types were easy to find in Amsterdam at that time; but they may be called super-beggars, for as a critic says, "One is almost inclined to say that they cannot be beggars, because the master's hand has endowed them with the warmth and splendor with which his artistic temperament clothed everything he looked at."

Some of Rembrandt's etchings have brought great prices. In most cases, however, these prices varied because of the "state" of the plates. The points of difference between these "states" arise from the additions and changes made by Rembrandt on the plates. A single impression of one of his etchings, "Rembrandt with a Sword," was bought for about $10,000 in 1893. Another, "Ephraim Bonus with Black Ring," brought about $9,750; while a third, the "Hundred Guilder Print," fetched about $8,750.

Some may find in Rembrandt's etching much that at first appears rough and uncouth. More apparent skill and ease in drawing may appear to have been shown by other etchers. But Rembrandt's work may justly be termed big, for it was conceived on a grand scale by a genius and master.

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